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CONFIDENTIAL

SIPDIS
TELEGRAM

July 07, 2003

To: No Action Addressee
Action: Unknown
From: AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI (ABU DHABI 3178 - ROUTINE)
TAGS: EAID, PREL, PGOV, PHUM, KPAL, KWBG
Captions: None
Subject: UAEG LARGEST AID DONOR TO THE PALESTINIANS
Ref: None

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 03178

SIPDIS
CXABU:
ACTION: POL
INFO: RSO AMB DCM P/M ECON

DISSEMINATION: POL
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: AMB: MWAHBA
DRAFTED: ECON:CCRUMPLER
CLEARED: ADCM:KVANDEVATE C/ECON:OJOHN C/POL:JMAYBURY POL:MMENARD

VZCZCADI850
RR RUEHC RUEHXX RUEHDE
DE RUEHAD #3178 1881302
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 071302Z JUL 03
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0753
INFO RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE
RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI 3260

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 003178

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA, NEA/ARP, NEA/IPA, AND IO/UNP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/07/08
TAGS: [EAID](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: UAEG LARGEST AID DONOR TO THE PALESTINIANS

REF: ABU DHABI 3117

[11](#). (U) Classified by Ambassador Marcelle M. Wahba for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

[12](#). (C) Summary and comment: Despite ongoing humanitarian assistance activities in Afghanistan and now Iraq, the UAEG is continuing its robust aid programs to the Palestinians. The UAEG already has channeled nearly USD 78 million in project assistance to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip since September 2000, and pledged an additional USD 42 million at the 2003 Sharm Al-Sheikh (USD 21 million) and 2002 Beirut (USD 21 million) Summits -- making the UAE the largest Arab aid donor to the Palestinians since the Intifadah began more than two years ago (see reftel).

[13](#). (C) Summary and comment continued: The majority of both

official and private contributions generally are funneled through the government-controlled Red Crescent Authority (RCA), which in turn provides the assistance to the Palestinians in the form of project aid and goods -- not cash. The RCA created in August 2002 a separate oversight committee consisting of RCA, UNRWA, and Palestinian Authority representatives to track implementation of these projects. We are confident that oversight of RCA operations is of a high standard. As some measure of the UAE's desire to ensure that donations are not misdirected or misused, Emirati officials have assured us time and again that funds are transferred through legitimate channels and no monies go to the families of homicide/suicide bombers. End summary and comment.

RCA Administers Official Aid

¶4. (U) The RCA, chaired by de facto Minister of Foreign Affairs Shaykh Hamdan bin Zayid Al-Nahyan, has provided large amounts of humanitarian aid, such as blankets and medicines, to the Palestinians in recent years, and organized regional food and clothing drives across the UAE in 2002. The RCA also announced in August 2002 detailed plans to rebuild 800 housing units and various infrastructure facilities destroyed during Israeli incursions into Jenin at a cost of USD 27 million. As a result of its positive efforts, the RCA is one of the few Arab humanitarian organizations permitted by Israeli authorities to continue working in Israeli occupied areas.

Royal Family Contributions Are Significant...

¶5. (U) Although we do not have official tallies, the private donations of royal family members to the Palestinians certainly total tens of millions of dollars. Most recently, local press announced July 5 the generous USD 1 million donation by Shaykha Fatima bint Mubarak Al-Kitbi -- President Zayid's wife and UAE First Lady -- toward the construction of the Shaykha Fatima Rehabilitation Center For Disabled Children in Hebron. The RCA, the International Labor Organization, and the UN Development Program are supervising the construction of the USD 3.5 million facility, which will provide vocational training to approximately 700,000 disabled Palestinians.

¶6. (U) President Zayid bin Sultan Al-Nahyan likewise undertook in April 2002 to personally bear the cost of repairing damage inflicted on the Church of the Nativity and nearby Omar Mosque as a result of the three-week long standoff between Israeli forces and Palestinians holed up in the church compound. Shaykh Zayid instructed the RCA to initiate contact with mosque and church authorities in Bethlehem and begin renovations immediately.

...As Are Private Donations

¶7. (U) There has also been an enormous outpouring of private UAE donations to the Palestinians. Fundraising campaigns conducted in Abu Dhabi and Dubai raised close to USD 100 million in 2002. UAE embassies abroad and local government offices have been encouraged to collectively donate one day's salary to assist the Palestinian refugees in Jenin, and students' groups and other civic associations have rallied to the cause. Funds raised through such public campaigns are funneled through the RCA in Abu Dhabi or the Shaykh Mohammed bin Rashid Charitable Foundation in the case of Dubai.

Wahba